

## THE FAIRFIELD COUNTY HOARD.

During 1950, in the course of some excavations on the site of an old barn on a pre-Revolutionary War estate in the town of Stepney, in Fairfield County, Connecticut, there was brought to light an antique iron kettle apparently completely filled with earth. This kettle appeared to be of 18th Century manufacture; it was undamaged, and probably had lain undisturbed since its burial next to one of the posts in the barn. The barn itself was said to have been built around 1760.

Upon removal of the soil from within the kettle, the owners found a quantity of well-incrusted copper and brass coins. They sold all of these (though retaining the kettle) to Stack's of New York City, by whom a few of the choicer specimens were<sup>re</sup> sold after cleaning with boiling water had removed the incrustations. Early in 1951 I had the good fortune to examine and study the remainder of this hoard, and the present discussion is the result, although this has been previewed in the Numismatist article "Survey of American Coin Hoards."

There follows, first in summary and then in detail, a catalogue of the contents of this hoard. It must be remembered that this does not include the coins sold before I obtained access to the hoard, and that therefore the conclusions here submitted may have to be revised later if those pieces should become available for study. They are said to have included twenty-odd Connecticut cents and eight Vermont cents, head types only, all in mint state. Unfortunately, dates and attributions were not recorded.

### Summary:

- No. 1 is a Nova Eborac.
- Nos. 2- 73 are coins purporting to be British and Irish half-pence.
- Nos. 74- 81 are Connecticut cents of 1785.
- Nos. 82- 99 are Connecticut cents of 1786.
- Nos. 100-174 are Connecticut cents of 1787.
- Nos. 175-178 are Connecticut cents of 1788.
- Nos. 179-181 are Vermont cents.



In the following catalogue, where condition is not mentioned, each coin is in mint state or near that preservation. (allowance is made for the fact that many Connecticuts were very poorly struck; coins showing mint lustre frequently have illegible areas.) Where metal is not stated, it is copper. Attributions to Miller-Nyder and Richardson will replace ~~most~~ ~~many~~ detailed notice of die varieties. Weight standards for British and Connecticut coppers are 144 grains each (Crosby, p.209) and for the Vermonts, 111 grains each (ibid., p.179). All weights are given in grains, and (owing to limitations in available scale weights) all are rounded off to the nearest quarter grain.

#### GREAT BRITAIN

1. ☉ NOVA ☉ EBORAC ☉ Gynandroid mailed bust r.  
 R ☉ VIRT. ET LIB ☉ Female figure seated l. of Britannia type, but with New York shield. In ex., 1787. Halfpenn, token, wt. 112 grains. Crosby, p. 341, no. 2, Fig. 86, and Plate VIII, No. 11. Condition, fine.
2. GEORGIUS II REX. Crude head l. R HIBERNIA, harp and illegible date. 115 grains. Contemporaneous counterfeit halfpenny. Very worn.
- 3—19. Similar obverses to last. R BRITAN NIA and dates mostly partly or wholly illegible, 1736-174(9?). Wts., 100 $\frac{1}{4}$  to 165 grains; the heavier specimens--seven or eight above 130 grains--are all crude brass casts. (All others are coppers struck from false dies.) Counterfeits as above, without exception. All are worn.
- 20—25. Crude heads to r. with GEORGIUS III REX (various punctuations). R HIBERNIA, harp and various dates 176(2?)-178(1?) mostly partly or wholly illegible. Wgts. of five, 71 to 123 $\frac{1}{4}$  grains; the sixth, 140 grains, but the die work condemns this one along with its fellows. Counterfeits as above. All are worn.
- 26—54. Similar obverses to preceding of George III. R BRITAN NIA and dates 1771-1775 inclusive. Three are dated 1771, one 1772, three 1773, four 1774, eighteen 1775. No two are from the same dies, though all of 1771-2-3 are of similar workmanship and condition. Wts. range from 90 to 127 grains, with one 1774 of 148 $\frac{1}{4}$  and <sup>one</sup> 1775 of 137 $\frac{1}{4}$  grains; on both the portraiture (and die work generally) are quite superior to all the rest, though not matching the average on genuine coppers of these dates. With these two possible exceptions, all are contemporaneous counterfeits; condition, good to very fine.



55—57. Types similar to last, but date 1776, which is prima facie evidence that ~~these~~ <sup>the</sup> are false. (The Tower Mint struck no halfpence of this type after 1775.) All three are from different dies; one has the king's name spelled GEORGIUS. This last, however, bears no resemblance whatever to the GEORGIUS obverse by James F. Atlee (muled with the IMMUNE COLUMBIA die). Instead, this (like the other two of 1776) has an affinity to the 1771-2-3 issues, Nos. 26—33, and presumably came from the same source. Wts. 116½, 118 (the GEORGIUS) and 119½ grains. Counterfeits as above. Condition, fine.

58—60. Illegible pieces, at least one of which (the heaviest) is definitely a purported <sup>British</sup> halfpenny type of Geo. III. Wts. 96, 99, 120 grains; all are halfpenny size and are listed here for want of better information on their provenance. All are poor.

Between the preceding, Nos. 26—57, and the thirteen halfpence to follow, nos. 61—73 (dated 1778-87-88), there is a vast difference in workmanship. These latter without exception bear unmistakable signs of common origin in Machin's Mill: evidence in form of identity of fabric, letter and figure punches and similarity in workmanship to each other and to certain issues usually classed as Vermont and Connecticut coins, but more accurately ascribed to Atlee and Machin's Mill. The reverses of three of these are <sup>from</sup> the same die as that later used on the so-called Vermont cent with BRITANNIA reverse. Nos. 61—73 and following, despite their inscriptions, will consequently be listed as the initial coins under the heading:

#### NEW YORK & CONNECTICUT

61—63. Similar to preceding British types--milled bust r., &c., but dated 1778 (sic). Dies of all three identical. Workmanship, letter and figure punches, fabric (i.e. texture and finish of copper) identical with following pieces known to have been made in Machin's Mill. Wts. 84 (clipped) to 100½ grains. Counterfeit halfpence as next; Mint State.

64—66. Three more of identical workmanship, but all are from a single slightly differing pair of dies dated 1787. Remarks as above. Wts. range from 107½ to 118½ grains.

67—69. As last. Three very slightly differing obverses (one is the same die as that illustrated as "Machin's Halfpenny" on the fourth page of Kurth's introduction to Richardson on Vermont coinages (May 1947 <sup>unpublished</sup>)).



All three have as reverse the same die (having small crack or flaw just over Britannia's head, pointing southwest) as was later used with the Vermont obverse (Richardson No. 13) and as was illustrated by Kurth, as mentioned above, as the reverse of "Machin's halfpenny." Remarks otherwise as above. Wts.  $94\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $117\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $118\frac{1}{4}$  grains.

70-73. As last, one pair of dies very slightly differing, dated 1788. Wts. of first three range from  $96\frac{1}{4}$  to  $112$  grains--the fourth is  $137\frac{1}{2}$  grains.

74-75. AUCTORI: CONNEC: Mailed bust r.  $\cancel{R}$  INDE ET LIB: Female seated l. In ex. 1785. Miller-Ryder  $3^3P^3$ . Wts., 157 and 143 grains.

76-77. Similar.  $M.3^4P^2$ . Wts. 139 and 133 grains, latter worn.

78. Similar.  $M.3^5B$ . wt.  $141\frac{1}{2}$  grains.

I may mention <sup>here</sup> that I have seen one specimen of an unlisted muling, obv.  $3^5$ , rev. L, though not from this hoard. Fine, wt.  $126\frac{1}{4}$  grains.

79-80. Similar.  $M.4^4C$ . Wts. 133 (very fine) and  $124\frac{1}{4}$ , latter has defective planchet.

81. Similar.  $M.6^3G^1$ . Wt.  $131\frac{1}{4}$  grains.

82. Similar types, but dated 1786.  $M.3-D^1$ . Wt. 115 grains. Slight damage, probably made at burial by rough gravel in the kettle; otherwise excellent condition; this same damage has left characteristic identifying marks on many of these coins.

83-84. Similar legends, but mailed bust left. (Same head as on 1785 Obvs. 7 and 8, 1786 Obv. types 4 and 5 except  $5^1$ ,  $5^3$ ,  $5^6$ .)  $M.4^1G$ , wts.  $132\frac{1}{4}$  (damaged as last) and  $159\frac{1}{4}$  (worn and double-struck).

85. Similar. Unlisted muling,  $M.4^2$  with rev. G. Wt.  $147\frac{1}{4}$  grains. Fine but poorly struck.  $R^6$ .

86. Similar.  $M.5^2H^1$ . 124 grains.  $R^5$ .

87. Similar.  $M.5^2I$ . Wt.  $126\frac{1}{4}$  grains. Fine, defective planchet.

88. Similar.  $M.5^2L$ , formerly called  $5^{12}L$  (see supplement to Miller-Ryder). Wt.  $134\frac{1}{2}$  grains, worn.  $R^6$ .

89. Similar.  $M.5^4O^1$ . Wt.  $124\frac{1}{2}$  grains. Very slight damage as in No. 82, otherwise excellent.

90. Similar.  $M.5^5M$ . Wt.  $118\frac{1}{4}$  grains.

91-93. Similar.  $M.5^8F$ . All poorly and unevenly struck but otherwise in superior preservation. Wts. 121,  $134\frac{1}{2}$  (fine),  $151\frac{1}{2}$  grains, latter on a defective planchet. ¶ These three were at first catalogued as from a



new obverse but comparison to the two M.5<sup>8</sup>F's in ANS (Canfield coll.) showed that all three were from the same die, though poor striking prevented some parts from showing distinctly, with the result that distances between devices appear to be different.

94. Similar. M.5<sup>9</sup>B<sup>1</sup>. wt. 147 grains. worn, damaged like No.82.

95-96. Similar. M.5<sup>10</sup>L. Wts. 128 and 129½ grains, latter worn.

The former shows, on obv., incusations of a reverse commonly called "suction marks."

97. Similar. M.5<sup>11</sup>R. wt. 113½ grains, worn, damaged like No.82. R<sup>5</sup>.

98-99. Similar. M.5<sup>14</sup>S, sword hilt under elbow. wts. 102 and 136½ grains. Both very fine but poorly struck. R<sup>6</sup>.

Both of these likewise were originally listed as from a new obverse, for reasons like those applying to Nos. 91-93. This error is more to be expected here, inasmuch as no single specimen shows a complete impression from the dies, and no complete description has been heretofore available. Miller and Ryder were deceived too; their variety 5<sup>15</sup>S is the same as their 5<sup>14</sup>S but has the heavy diebreak described in the (Canfield and Ryder) supplement. The corrected description to follow is compiled from all of the specimens I have seen--Nos. 98, 99 and the two in ANS (Canfield coll.)

Obverse 5<sup>14</sup>, with reverse S. AUCTORI: CONREC: Head from the same hub as all of 1786 obverses of types 4 and 5 except 5<sup>1</sup>, 5<sup>3</sup>, 5<sup>6</sup> (and possibly 5<sup>13</sup>). Legend very wide, especially A U and C T O. The I slants to left. First colon slants r.; its lower dot partly under base arc line of letters, its upper dot low, the underside on a level with center of I. C O distant from head; NE closer than other letters. Final C and colon tilted left, the C slightly low, the upper dot of colon low, and its lower dot much nearer C than shoulder. Lower fillet points between C and colon. Border denticles unusually fine.

One or two specimens of this die have a large semicircular sunken area or failure, about 8 mm. wide, from edge to shoulder: Miller-Ryder's "Obv. 5<sup>15</sup>."

Reverse S, with obverse 5<sup>14</sup>. INDE: ET-LIB. Date wide, with line above it double, the lower stroke being heavier and the lines diverging to right. Branch hand points at D and slightly left; branch thick and stubby, with five undersized leaves on each side and one at top. Counting from the bottom, the first and fourth at left are detached, and the fourth at right has an engraver's scratch at its end. Top of



branch points a minuscule to rt. of period. Wide I N D E, the IN being a trifle closer together. First colon upright and extremely close to E; upper dot very low, opposite center of E; lower dot normal. The E is blocked in. Pole hand touches second E; pole has minute Liberty cap on top, and touches border which has extra fine denticles. T appears to be cut over some other letter, whose traces show at sides. Dot or short hyphen between T and L is high and midway. LLB quite close together. Upper dot of final colon opposite center of B; B midway upper dot and I. Colon slants left, and its lower dot much more than half on shield. B almost touches shield. Sword hilt and guard plain under elbow; the hilt points to left half of the T.

100-102. Similar types, but dated 1787. M.2-B. Wts. 132, 142½ and 146½ grains. The second is very fine only, and the third is on a defective planchet.

103. Similar. M.8-O. wt. 108 grains, fine condition.

104. Similar. M.9-D. Wt. 116 grains (trace of clipping at mint).

105. Similar. M. 9-E. wt. 132 grains, damaged like No. 82, defective planchet.

106. Similar. M.9-R. wt. 114½ grains. R<sup>5</sup>.

107. Similar. M.11<sup>1</sup>E. wt. 146½ grains. This and the preceding obv. are from a hub seen also on the "CONNECT" obverse and obverse types 10-11-12 of 1788.

108. Similar. M.11<sup>2</sup>K. wt. 146 grains. Very fine, double-struck.

109. Similar. M.14-H, the type with pheons. Wt. 117, sl. clipped.

110. Similar legends, but draped bust left, from a hub common to all draped 1787 obverses numbered between 16 and 56, as well as the 1788 dies with draped bust. M. 20-a<sup>2</sup>. Without the diebreak described. Wt. 143 grns.

111. Similar. M.26-a<sup>1</sup>. Flan defect at edge. Wt. 147½. R<sup>5</sup>.

112-3. Similar. M.31<sup>1</sup>gg<sup>1</sup>. Wts. 134 and 143 grains, former with flan defects, latter with damage similar to No. 82.

114. Similar. M.31<sup>2</sup>r<sup>3</sup>. Wt. 118½ grains.

115. Similar. M.32<sup>3</sup>x<sup>4</sup>. Wt. 155½ grains.

116. Similar. M.32<sup>5</sup>aa. Wt. 136½ grains. Very fine, but planchet poorly cut out.

117. Similar. M.33<sup>1</sup>z<sup>13</sup>. Wt. 149½ grains. Very fine plus.

118-120. Similar. M.33<sup>2</sup>z<sup>12</sup>. Wts. 116½, 134½, 129½ grains, first two being slightly circulated.



121. Similar. M.33<sup>2</sup>Z<sup>17</sup>. Wt. 135½ grains. Fine.

122. Similar. M.33<sup>6</sup>KK. Wt. 136¼, extremely fine.

This variety provides the conclusive proof that a hub was used for the obverses of the draped bust 1787's, as the hub (otherwise showing a bust identical with that in all the obverses of this year numbered 16-56 except 52) here was punched in twice. Miller did not describe this obverse as such; his "Three fillet ends. Toga double out" is misleading. The effect seen in this die could have been produced in no other way than by double punching of a complete head-punch or hub.

123. Similar. M.33<sup>7</sup>r<sup>2</sup>. Wt. 134½ grains. Extremely fine.

124. Similar. M.33<sup>7</sup>r<sup>4</sup>. Wt. 153 grains. R<sup>6</sup>.

125. Similar. M.33<sup>9</sup>s<sup>2</sup>. Wt. 114 grains. Fine, defective flan.

126. Similar. M.33<sup>10</sup>Z<sup>7</sup>. Wt. 149¼ grains. Defective planchet. R<sup>5</sup>.

127. Similar. M.33<sup>10</sup>Z<sup>8</sup>. Wt. 102½ grains.

128. Similar. M.33<sup>12</sup>Z<sup>16</sup>. Wt. 143¼ grains.

129. Similar. M.33<sup>12</sup>Z<sup>24</sup>. Wt. 125½ grains. R<sup>6</sup>.

130. Similar. M.33<sup>13</sup>Z<sup>1</sup>. Wt. 130 grains, clipped. Ext. fine. R<sup>5</sup>.

131. Similar. M.33<sup>13</sup>Z<sup>7</sup>. Wt. 155¼ grains, very fine, defective flan.

132. Similar. M.33<sup>14</sup>Z<sup>14</sup>. Wt. 160¼ grains.

133-134. Similar. M.33<sup>15</sup>r<sup>1</sup>. Wts. 143 and 135½ grains, latter very fine. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

135-136. Similar. M.33<sup>16</sup>Z<sup>15</sup>. Wts. 136¼ and 137 grains, latter very fine and with defective planchet.

137. Similar. M.33<sup>17</sup>r<sup>1</sup>. Wt. 134¼ grains (clipped).

138. Similar. M.33<sup>17</sup>eg<sup>2</sup>. Wt. 130¼ grains, double struck.

139-140. Similar. M.33<sup>19</sup>Z<sup>1</sup>. Wts. 139¼ and 122 grains, both very fine, both on defective planchets.

141. Similar. M.33<sup>28</sup>Z<sup>11</sup>. Wt. 146 grains.

142-145. Similar. M.33<sup>28</sup>Z<sup>16</sup>. Wts. 115¼ (defective flan), 128¼, 129¼, and 163¼ grains. The first and third are only very fine condition; the fourth is struck on a heavy irregular planchet similar to two following

146-148. Similar. M.33<sup>32</sup>Z<sup>13</sup>. Wts. 139¼, 135½ (fine), 142½ (fine) grains. The first two are struck on irregular (not round) planchets like that of No. 145.

149. Similar. M.33<sup>36</sup>r<sup>2</sup>. Wt. 126½ grains.

150. Similar. M.33<sup>40</sup>Z<sup>2</sup>. Wt. 137 grains. R<sup>5</sup>.

151. Similar. M.37<sup>1</sup>oo<sup>1</sup>. Wt. 170 grains, very fine. This is the second heaviest piece in the hoard.



152. Similar. M.37<sup>2</sup>k<sup>5</sup>. Wt. 158 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains.  
 153--155. Similar. M.37<sup>3</sup>i. Wts. 144 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 132 $\frac{1}{2}$  (extremely fine) and 166 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains. The first and third are on defective planchets.  
 156--157. Similar. M.37<sup>4</sup>k<sup>1</sup>. Wts. 145 and 121 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains.  
 158. Similar. M.37<sup>8</sup>HH. Wt. 160 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains, very fine.  
 159--160. Similar. M.37<sup>8</sup>LL. Wts. 150 and 142 grains, latter very fine.  
 161--162. Similar. M.37<sup>9</sup>e. Wts. 153 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 120 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains.  
 163--164. Similar. M.37<sup>11</sup>ff<sup>2</sup>. Wts. 132 $\frac{1}{2}$  (very fine) and 171 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains. The latter is on a slightly defective planchet and is the heaviest piece in the hoard, being nearly thirty grains above the Connecticut standard.  
 165. Similar. M.37<sup>12</sup>LL. Wt. 131 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains, very fine--planchet rough and defective.  
 166. Similar, but erroneous legend AUCTORI CONNCO. M.38-1<sup>2</sup>. Wt. 136 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains, fine.  
 167--168. Similar to last. M.38-GG. Wts. 156 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 151 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains, both very fine.  
 169. Similar, but legend in large letters and reads AUCTORI CONNCO, punctuated with stars. M.41-II. Wt. 151 grains, extremely fine.  
 170. Similar, but correct legend. M.44-W<sup>4</sup>. Wt. 107 $\frac{1}{2}$  grains.  
 171. Similar. M.46-BB. Wt. 133 grains, fine, damaged like No. 82.  
 172--174. Similar. M.53-FF. Wts. 106 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 112 $\frac{3}{4}$  and 154 grains, all very fine.  
 175. Similar legends, but mailed bust to left and dated 1788. M.9-E. Wt. 133 grains.  
 176--177. As last; hub noted under 1787 Obv. 9. W.12<sup>1</sup>F<sup>1</sup>. Wts. 105 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 104 $\frac{3}{4}$ ; former perfect, latter slightly clipped and on imperfect flan.  
 178. As last. M.12<sup>2</sup>E. Wt. 123 grains, perfect.

## NEW YORK--VERMONT.

- 179--180. Obv. VERMONT AUCTORI and crude bust r. as on Nos. 61--73, counterfeit halfpence attributed to Atlee. Reverse, same die as Nos. 67--69 xxx (BRITAN NIA.). The Vermont with Britannia reverse, Ryder--Richardson no. 13. Both examples are so much worn that I have doubts whether they actually belong with the hoard as was claimed (though they were indeed not in the same bag in which the other coins had been kept after sale to Stack's). Weights approximately 90 grains; the second one has an immense diebreak where the date should be.

181. (1788) Vermont cent C.4-U, Ryder 27. Wt. 106 grains.

Some comments as above  
 None of the 179--181 are  
 in condition of 1/2 piece #166  
 or Cts. #175-178.



It is apparent, as Mr. Noe says in "The Castine Deposit", that any assignment of a date for the burial of this hoard must be governed by the coins found. And since most of those coins bear more or less legible dates, it is equally likely that those dated latest are the nearest to the actual time of burial; also that much can be judged from the preservation of those coins. If, for instance, all of the 1788 coins had been quite worn, the conclusion might be justified that the hoard was buried later than that year, depending of course on how far the burial site was from the mint.

Let us look therefore at these coins to attempt to fix the date of burial. Three facts immediately stand out: (1) The latest discernible date on a piece is 1788. (2) There are only a few pieces of this date, even if we exclude Nos. 179--181 which are assignable to that year and which have possibly been interpolated, not really belonging to the original hoard. Actual count discloses only eight pieces dated 1788 besides the Vermonts--and eighty-one dated 1787. Now the coinage of 1788 Connecticut is far from rare even in comparison with the very large issue of 1787. <sup>Byron</sup> ~~if~~ all of the twenty-odd Connecticut and eight Vermonts sold before I saw the hoard had been of 1788, that would not occasion much change here--this hoard still would show relative scarcity of that date.) (3) All of the coins dated 1788 are in mint condition, a thing true of considerably fewer of the 1787-and-earlier pieces.

The conclusion is at least probable, therefore, that this hoard was buried in 1788, assuming of course that the coppers were not all predated. This takes into account the fact that the burial site (Stepney) is not many miles away from either the mint at Machin's mill, near Newburgh, N.Y., or the two Connecticut mints just outside New Haven (Westville and Morris Cove--see Crosby, pp. 210--211). Moreover, there is no specimen of the Machin issues ascribed to the period 1789-91 (IMMUNE COLUMBIA; GEORGE III, REX mules with 1788 Rev. <sup>D</sup> and <sup>A</sup> of the Connecticuts and the like). If the hoard were of a later period than this year, one would expect (even in view of the proximity of the three mints) that the 1788 issues would show wear (as the 1786 and 1787 do), and that there would ~~not be~~ <sup>would be</sup> such an overwhelming preponderance of the earlier years, ~~as~~ <sup>also that there</sup> ~~would be~~ examples of the above-mentioned Machin products, ascribable to 1789-91.